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October 10, 1980

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IRAQ-IRAN

~~TOP SECRET~~

USSR-Iran

The USSR is attempting to offset Iran's animosity generated by the Soviet arms supply relationship with Iraq. Over the past several days Soviet Ambassador to Iran Vinogradov has met with Prime Minister Rajai and Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani to mollify Tehran and to suggest that the Soviets still want a good relationship with the government in Tehran.

Subsequent Iranian claims that Vinogradov offered arms to Iran have been denied forcefully by the Soviets, apparently for Baghdad's benefit. It seems likely, however, that Vinogradov suggested broadening the existing arms supply relationship.

[redacted] has heard that Vinogradov made a general offer of assistance against "imperialist aggression."

The Soviets' efforts to improve relations with Tehran may have been spurred by their impression that Iran has so far been unwilling to lessen its hostility toward the US in order to obtain US military supplies. They probably have now concluded that the war, rather than leading to the collapse of the Khomeini regime, has strengthened it. Some Soviet diplomats reportedly have been surprised that the ethnic groups in Iran have not exploited the conflict with Iraq to increase pressure for autonomy.

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C There has been no indication, however, that Iranian leaders have become any more amenable to Soviet overtures, and the war may have strengthened their suspicions of the USSR. Ayatollah Beheshti, in a press conference Wednesday, accused Moscow of cooperating with the US against Iran.

Military Resupply

In line with Soviet efforts to avoid antagonizing Tehran, Moscow apparently is stalling on expediting additional supplies to Iraq. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Iranian Diplomatic Activity

Iran continues to reject a cease-fire but is increasing its diplomatic efforts to present its case against Iraq. Ayatollah Khomeini yesterday again called for the overthrow of the Baghdad regime. Khomeini apparently is considering a proposal from Tehran's new representative to the UN, Ali Shams Ardakani, to present a formal demarche to the Security Council condemning Iraq and calling for Iraqi withdrawal from Khuzestan. [REDACTED]

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C Ardakani and some Iranian leaders, including President Bani-Sadr, are becoming increasingly concerned about Tehran's diplomatic isolation. Ardakani has been urging his government to refrain from threatening the Persian oil producers and other belligerent acts in order to improve Iran's image. Iran has sought to improve its ties with Arab radicals such as Syria and Libya and is dispatching an emissary to Western Europe and Moscow to present Tehran's case. [redacted]

Iranian clerical leaders are less concerned about the country's isolation. On Wednesday Beheshti publicly rejected Bani-Sadr's claim that Iran must improve its international image. The clerics have long sought to minimize the influence of diplomats like Ardakani. [redacted]

Israeli Concern

The Israelis are monitoring the arrival of cargo in Al Aqaba closely. According to [redacted] an Israeli patrol boat in the Straits of Tiran halted an Iraqi cargo ship headed for Al Aqaba on Tuesday. After determining the ship's cargo, the Israelis let it proceed. [redacted]

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